HARAMBEE FLAME

a publication of the harambee afrikan cultural organization

VOL. V No. 12 December 1984

KWANZAA

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will be holding its third annual Kwanzaa celebration on the 27th. of December. There are yet details to be worked out. Nevertheless, those of you who are interested in attending, please get in contact with us.

As we did last year in the FLAME, we urge you to seriously examine why you celebrate Christmas and whether you should continue to do so. At the same time, we encourage you to examine the concept of Kwanzaa and to join with the many other African folks across the U.S. who have chosen to reject the hocus-pocus-based Christmas(with its Santa Clauses and obscene commercialization) in favor of a celebration of ourselves.

We present here both some generally unknown information about Christmas as well as information regarding the origin, symbolism, and functions of the celebration of Kwanzaa. Celebrate what you wish to celebrate or celebrate nothing at all. Whatever you do, do it because it makes sense.

ABOUT CHRISTMAS

-"Traditions have enormous staying power. Today Christians are so used to celebrating Christmas that it's hard to remember that the idea of commemorating Christ's nativity didn't begin until the fourth century....Like an evangelical vacuum cleaner, the early Christmas celebrations could suck in bits and pieces of popular pagan customs. From Saturnalia, they borrowed feasting, game-playing, and gift-giving. From

THIS PAST YEAR

Well, 1984 is just about over with. Is this not an appropriate time to look back over the year and what it has meant, in the way of events and developments, to African people? In many ways, 1984 was a year in which things remained the same.

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization continued providing, through programs at our meetings and through our newsletter and other informational materials, education to our members. And while our efforts have resulted in challenging some of our members to question and to think, we have to be disappointed that our organization has not made an appreciable dent in the prevalence of "niggerism"--an attitude in which African people think of themselves and other African folks as "niggers." Some of us are still speaking of our Sisters as "bitches," speaking of ourselves and each others as "niggers," running nickel-and-dime game down on each other, spending far too much time watching mindless television fare and too little time studying issues of importance to us.

What about African folks on the outside, particularly in Omaha? To say the least, it has been a season of funerals, marked by African-on-African assaults and killings. Where have been the voices and efforts of our community leaders and pseudo-leaders with respect to this carnage? Any where to be found? In the meantime, we've had negroes-for-Reagan, bourgeois balls and dinners, and a long list of other incredible doings and goings on.

The state of African folks in America? There was a fellow by the name of Jesse Jackson who told us he was going to run

KWANZAA
(About Christmas, cont.)

the pagan feast of Scandinavia and Teutonic countries, they took the customs of the Yule log and baking cakes.... [1]When the Roman Saturnalia was expanded to seven days, its final days became known as the Sigillaria. On those days the Sigillarii, or doll-makers, held a fair, doing a brisk business with Roman gift-givers. Friends gave each other presents of the dolls, wax or paste fruits, or candles. Each gift can be traced to ancient celebrations of the solstice: the fruit, to fertility rights; the candles, to the making of new fires to encourage the tiring sun; the dolls, to human sacrifice."

1 This section actually appeared earlier in the article than the excerpt which precedes it.

(The above excerpted from an article in the December 1980 issue of JOHNS HOPKINS MAGAZINE. Emphases added.)

The purpose of the above is to shed some light on the origin of Christmas. At the time when the December 25th. date was established as Jesus' birthday, the scholars of the Catholic Church did not know when Jesus had been born. The historical evidence suggests that the December 25th. date was chosen because it fell at a time already being celebrated through the Roman Saturnalia. In fact, the Biblical evidence suggests that Jesus was born either in the Fall or Spring.

-"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.'"

(Matthew: Chapter 2, verses 13-15)

THIS PAST YEAR(cont.)

for the office of the presidency. He enthused and motivated millions of us and shocked America with the level of support he received during the primaries.

Then, lo and behold, this lone African member of the Nebraska State Legislature, told us that Jesse was a sell-out for his repudiation of Minister Farrakhan, and some of us were offended by this. Next thing you know, our "messiah," after having gone to the Democratic convention with certain non-negotiable demands and having had them all rejected by the Democratic Party, delivers an address at the convention in which he exhorts us to support the Democrats anyway. Looks like this lone African legislator, Ernie Chambers, was quite correct about Jesse.

But Jesse did not corner the market on selling out/being a tool for the Caucasian political establishment. 1984 was the year in which Andrew Young, Corretta Scott King, Tom Bradley, Wilson Goode, and several other "responsible negro leaders" rejected Jesse Jackson for a veritable mannequin, Walter Mondale.

On an island called "Grenada," where 110,000 mostly African people live, there was a government which had the enthusiastic support of its people. Conveniently, the charismatic head of the government, Maurice Bishop, was murdered. And the armed forces of the U.S. did to Grenada what they are trying to do now to Nicaragua unofficially. They invaded the little island and are yet occupying it--to make it "safe for democracy."

In Ethiopia and in other nations of the Sahel region, there is famine, famine caused by drought, war, and certainly a degree of corruption on the part of governments in the area. But this famine has also been brought about by the manipulation of African economies by the U.S. and other members of the Euro-American financial clique. And while

KWANZAA
(About Christmas, cont.)

The above quotation from the Bible is cited here to assist in making the point that, not only are the origins of the Christmas celebration rooted in matters having no relation to the birth of Jesus, but that the very person whose birthday Christmas alleges to celebrate is a manufactured person, a manufactured Jesus.

While we would not be so outrageous to suggest that "The Creator" is African (How can a spirit possibly have physical features?), we do question how a Jesus of African or African-Asian lineage has wound up being portrayed as a European. Using the passage from Matthew as a reference point and bearing in mind that the G reek historian, Herodotus, described Egyptians as "black" and having "broad noses," "wooly hair," and "thick lips," how is it that an "angel of the Lord" would have sent Jesus and his mother and father into the land of Egypt to hide, particularly if Jesus and(of course) his parents were Europeans? This would have been comparable to asking an elephant to hide among sheep.

The historical Jesus appears to have been a righteous and important figure. And we would be silly to quibble over his color and/or nationality. On the other hand, if the available evidence makes it clear that the Roman Catholic Church doctored with the identity of Jesus, why should we celebrate the manufactured result?

-Lastly, Christmas has become primarily a big money-maker for the corporate world. Aren't we ripped off enough normally without offering ourselves up for this special rip-off during the Christmas Season?

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ORIGIN, SYMBOLISM, & FUNCTIONS OF KWANZAA

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Maulana Ron Karenga and is based upon the native African custom of celebrating the bringing in of the harvest.

(Continued on p. 5)

ESSAY CONTEST

High School and Undergraduate College Students!

What do you think is wrong with public education?

What improvements need to be made?

In at least 800 words, tell AIM Magazine.

1st. Prize.....$100

2nd. Prize.....$75

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Deadline, February 21, 1985

Winning essays will be published in Spring issue. Winners will be notified before publication.

AIM MAGAZINE; P.O. Box 20554; Chicago, Illinois; 60620

With your submissions, include name, age, grade, school, and photograph.

THIS PAST YEAR(cont.)

the greatest food-producer in the world, the U.S., has provided significant food aid during the past several weeks(thanks to wide publicity in regards the famine), the fact is that this nation's government follows a general policy of witholding aid to those countries which have political/economic systems which the U.S. does not agree with.

But things have not all been bad for African people. And those negative events and developments spoken of here by no means even scratch the surface of the general plight of African folks around the world. Be that as it may, we will touch upon what appear to be positive developments and signs in the next edition of the FLAME. Furthermore, we invite you to submit essays(no more than 800 words) on what you think were the most promising developments and/or signs of this past year.

1. The Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, founded in Jamaica--July 20, 1914; introduced to the U.S. in 1916.
2. For having established the largest international political movement among Africans in world history, which, of course, was Pan-Africanist in philosophy.
3. *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskeegee Institute, Alabama.
4. The UNIA hotel as well as one of the ships of the Black Star Line was named after this 18th century poetess. In addition to being a brilliant mass leader, liberator, and prolific publisher, Garvey himself was also a poet and published two books of his verse.
5. *Jomo Kenyatta*, first president of independent Kenya and leader of the Mau Mau.
6. *Cuba*, which in the mid-1920's, had 52 branches. These branches were comprised of British West Indians and Haitians who had migrated to Cuba by the thousands to work as cane cutters.
7. *Costa Rica*. The UNIA in this country had looked after the needs and stood up for the rights of the Black population, while also operating a UNIA school.
8. (A) an active UNIA local in the capitol of Port Au Prince; (B) Haitian-born *Elie Garcia* served as UNIA Commissioner to Liberia, *Eliezer Cadet* was UNIA representative to the Paris Peace Conference, and *Jean Joseph Adams* was president of the San Francisco UNIA chapter, also representing the UNIA at the League of Nations in its efforts to regain African control of its territories formerly held by Germany.
9. In 1929 Garvey founded the *People's Political Party*, the first modern political party in the British West Indies.
10. The *Rastafarians* which came together as a movement in Jamaica in the 1930's. Garvey is quoted to have prophesied, "Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King. He shall be the Redeemer." In 1930 Ras Tafari Makonnen, descendant from the line of David through King Solomon and Queen Makeda (Queen of Sheba) was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia, taking the name Haile Selassie I ("Power of the Trinity"). Thus the principles of Rastafar-I sprouted forth into manifestation in the hearts of certain Jamaican Africans.
11. The late *Bob Marley*, prophetic message musician and singer.
12. Besides UNIA newspapers, magazines, schools, discussion groups, literary organizations, and debating societies formed for the enlightenment of our people. Garvey established the *School of African Philosophy* which sponsored correspondence courses and resident courses (in Canada) by which Garvey passed on to students from across the world his wisdom and knowledge of politics and history.
13. *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, founder of the Nation of Islam (known popularly as The Black Muslims), had been a UNIA member in Detroit during his youth.
14. *Nnamdi Azikiwe*, who in 1920 became acquainted as a schoolboy with Garveyism through the *Negro World* newspaper.
15. *South Africa*. Garveyites were in leadership of the ANC (African National Congress), an organization now fighting for the freedom of this brutally oppressed African nation. Also in South Africa, the African Christians formed an Ethiopian Church which held Garvey up as a prophet to African people worldwide.
16. Historian *J.A. Rogers; John Edward Bruce*, prolific journalist, founder of the Negro Society for Historical Research, and co-founder of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; and the great Puerto Rican bibliophile, *Arthur A. Schomburg*, co-founder of the Schomburg Center.
17. Internationally known elocutionist, *Henrietta Vinton Davis*, colleague of Frederick Douglass and first Black woman to serve in the office of recorder of deeds. Ms. Davis was 4th Assistant President-General and international organizer for the UNIA.
18. The great Pan-Africanist, *Kwame Nkrumah*, late former leader and first president of independent Ghana (which by the way was the first African nation, apart from the Sudan, to regain its dependence from foreign colonialists).
19. The brilliant military strategist, philosopher, and poet, *Ho Chi Minh*, leader of the Nort Vietnamese in the Vietnam War against western powers.
20. *Amy Jacques Garvey*, who under extremely trying circumstances and while rearing two young sons, carried on the work of the UNIA during Garvey's imprisonment. She edited sections of the UNIA newspaper, delivered speeches, worked tirelessly for Garvey's freedom during his frameup and incarceration; managed the UNIA home office and edited two books, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* and *The Poetic Works of Marcus Garvey*. Amy Jacques Garvey also authored and distributed a biography of Garvey's life entitled *Garvey and Garveyism*. In 1971 she become the seond woman and tenth person to be awarded the prestigious Musgrave Gold Medal by the Institute of Jamaica.
21. *Malcolm X* (El Hajj Malik El Shabazz) son of Rev. Earl Little, who like Malcolm was a freedom fighter for

Quiz

Black people until his death.

22. Greatly loved by the masses and and greatly maligned by the colonialists and those "black-whites" who did not identify with their African heritage, the great Spirit of Garvey has had the final victory in that he has been proclaimed the country's first national hero. A school, highway, scholarship fund, and Jamaican park have been named in his honor and a stamp issued bearing his image. Years after his death Garvey's name is revered and beloved by the people of Jamaica as well as millions across the world.

23. Queen Mother Audley Moore of Harlem, founder of the Queen Mother Moore Institute and tireless 85-year-old worker for the freedom of African-descended peoples.

24. They manufactured Black dolls made in the image and likeness of beautiful little Black girls.

25. The founding of the African Orthodox Church in 1921, introducting the concept of a Black Christ and African-centered theology to African Americans. Rev. George Alexander McGuire was the church's first bishop.

26. Africa for the Africans at home and abroad! Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will! (and surely we still can)

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The "Black History Quiz" is produced by THE UNIVERSAL BLACK WRITER. The above answers follow questions which appeared in the November issue of the FLAME.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE FLAME.

Send a money order for $6 to:

Harambee FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
P.O. Box 2500 Lincoln, NE.

ORIGIN, SYMBOLISM, & FUNCTIONS OF KWANZAA

Kwanzaa is a seven-day celebration that runs from Dec. 26 through Jan. 1 and is founded upon a series of traditional African principles. These principles stress the communal character of traditional African living, work, and consumption of the products of that work.

Each day of Kwanzaa is dedicated to a specific principle:

Dec. 26--Unity
Dec. 27--Self-determination
Dec. 28--Collective work and responsibility
Dec. 29--Cooperative economics
Dec. 30--Purpose
Dec. 31--Creativity
Jan. 1 --Faith

Kwanzaa was developed to give African people in the U.S. a holiday which would bring us closer to our Sisters and Brothers in Africa, in spirit; to bring us back into contact with important values which enabled us to thrive long ago but which we have substantially lost here in this place and time, and to give us a meaningful alternative to a highly commercialized Christmas.

We African folks in the U.S. are involved in a myriad of struggles and a myriad of obstacle that stand in our way as we go about the business of struggling. In this process it is vital that we turn away both from competing against each other and from selfish individualism. By emphasizing the beauty of working together, Kwanzaa fosters cooperation. And the simple gift-giving, which is a part of this celebration, stands as a reward for working together, for mutual love and cooperation.

If you want more information about Kwanzaa, contact the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization by mail and enclose a stamped(40¢ postage), self-addressed, business-size envelope. We will send material to you.

From other sources

AFRICAN FAMINE

"The African debt crisis is a well-kept secret. Bank loans to Africa, unlike those to Latin America, are relatively small and, therefore, not central to the capitalists' international banking system. When African countries can't pay, it's not big news.

"But African foreign debt--owed mainly to governments, the UN's World Bank and International Monetary Fund(IMF) and to international banks--is a matter of major concern to Africans. Easing of their debt burden and larger and more appropriate foreign financing are essential to reversing the economic deterioration that has fostered the current continent-wide famine. Incredibly, some of the creditors have been compounding the problems by withdrawing millions of dollars from the poorest countries....

"Africa's colonial past, notably the emphasis on specialized inedible export crops, laid the base for the current crises. The huge continent remains the least developed of all. Most of the more than 50 countries that share its territory won their independence less than 30 years ago. Some are still engaged in armed struggle to maintain or gain it. Already, virtually all are enmeshed to some degree in the financial and market devices imposed by the neo colonialists of Western Europe and the U.S....

"...Beginning in the 1970s, the prices of imports to Africa, notably oil, took off, while the prices of African exports stagnated. In addition, foreign markets for African products shrank during the recession in the northern hemisphere and the economic recovery there has scarcely been felt in Africa....

"African officials in recent years have repreatedly appealed for specific debt relief measures, including broad rescheduling of government as well as bank loans, conversion of some government loans into grants and setting ceilings on interest rates for poor countries. With a few small exceptions, the demands have been met with lip-service at best.

"Now, when sub-Saharan Africa is confronted with the imminent peril of drought and famine and the long-term threat of accelerating desertification and deforestation, the flow of capital into the area is drying up. The talk in high places of rehabilitation, recovery and renewed growth goes on. But so far not even the step of halting deterioration has been achieved."

--Excerpted from an article entitled "Nature Caused Africa Drought; Banks Caused Famine" in the November 21 edition of THE GUARDIAN, p. 17

PRIVACY & TECHNOLOGY

"According to former CIA communications expert David Watters, a great many telephone interceptions are snatched from the air from microwave transmissions that carry the bulk of American long-distance telecommunications. And telephone spying, like everything else, is being automated. As Watters told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 1978: 'By tapping into a microwave beam, the space-age eavesdropper immediately has access to thousands of conversations, data transmissions, and telegraphic messages. By using modern microelectronic technology,' he also notes, 'the listening post may be completely automatic, unmanned, and no larger than an ordinary hi-fi receiver.'"

--Excerpted from p. 26 of the December, '84 edition of MOTHER JONES

The FLAME is the monthly publication of the prison-based Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization located at the Nebraska State Prison in Lincoln. We welcome your views, information, poetry, etc.

Editor/Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

POETRY

MAD DOGS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH

Dogs,
Faces of dogs on the earth,
Wormy, pink wreckage
Of shrimp,
But the noise, oh, the noise
Of the little dog boys
Who long for an adventure
On someone else's turf,
Rogues that steal
The diamonds from a smile,
Images of clabbered milk,
Celluloid, pale, sick, dying,
Neurotic, peeling, dead--

A continuous pucker
Of stagnation,
Redundant symbols
Of oppression and screams,
Death by the gun, bazooka,
Or bayonet,
And the fun, the stench,
The foul odor of wealth,
The stealth in broad daylight
To support the tyrant's spite,
Bubbles of acid, wrapped in muslin
For wrinkled skin that's damned.

Mangy dogs of dim despair,
You glide from your pen
From trash heaps
To trash dung piles
That you know how to love
Designing with a smile.

Sweltering in radiance
On film
Mad dogs,
You have had it.

Your fall is certain.
You may dance as you please,
And as you are prone,
And you may sing,
With us, as you may sing alone,
But you have had it!

--Ella Robinson
(nov. 1984)

MATTHEW: A Relevant Response

By: Matthew C. Stelly

This is a response to a poem that appeared
in the most recent **Flame** — a poem really weird.
It was called "Matthew", and was paraphrased,
and the contents of this poem both shocked and amazed.

It implied that someone talks in general terms,
About the ills of people and all their concerns;
The poem is important, because it shows just why
So many people confuse the "how" with the "why."

A person is hungry, of course he needs food,
But an increase in food stamps will do him no good;
He must attack the **source** of his hunger pains,
And this calls for using his gut **and his brains.**

If a person is thirsty and his throat is parched
Then there **is** a need to protest and to march;
For objective conditions gave rise to his thirst,
And it's important to help those who are most in need **first.**

If there is a stranger who needed a friend,
Then a "fraternity of condition" is where we should begin,
For wherever he goes, if his skin is of dark hue
then we **automatically relate** because of our **point of view.**

If someone is naked, and needed some threads,
Then clothe him right then, but then let's use our heads
so if we do organize a clothing drive, then
We can clothe everyone and shield everyone's skin.

If a person is ill, we don't call for a nurse
We don't call the mortician or wheel in a hearse;
We look at the symptoms and decide what's wrong,
Then we see that the **diet** is probably what's wrong.

Not just a diet of bread, butter or meat,
But a diet of **values,** those things you can't eat;
If a person is ill, the source of indigestion
Might be lack of will in combatting his oppression.

If a man is in prison, you don't write for reform,
But you stand tall, contribute and make bloods feel warm;
You put all else aside and through prison walls stride
to converse and to offer to be at their side.

A poem that's called "Matthew" Should consider these things;
The social, the cultural and **all** that being black brings;
We address concrete needs — no more idle wishin'
Others address conduct — **I reshape conditions.**

By changing the environment in which people function,
You can nurture and develop a strong sense of compunction;
You can predict behavior, you can minimize regression
and viola! We can then move to overturn our oppression.